

Clerk of Circuit Court

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MISSION

The mission of the Clerk of Circuit Court's Office is to facilitate the orderly conduct of governmental, judicial, commercial and legal affairs for the citizens of Loudoun County by collecting the appropriate taxes and fees, processing legal documents, retaining permanent court records, land records, judgment records, and legal documents, providing public inspection of permanent records, and providing efficient administration of court cases and Clerk's Office service.

DESCRIPTION

The Office of the Circuit Court Clerk is organized into several functional divisions: Land Records – recordation, indexing and retention of land records and related documents; Probate – probating of wills and estates and preparation of legal documents; Court Services – filing and retention of court records, public inspection of court files, and the administration of services to support the Judges of Circuit Court; Jury Management – issuance of juror questionnaires, juror summonses and other legal documents and the coordination of jury trials and grand jury; Public Services – issuance of marriage licenses, notary commissions, concealed weapon permits, subpoenas, and the collection of court fines and costs assessed by the court; Administration – management of office operations, budget and finance, payroll, human resources and other related administrative/managerial functions. The Clerk's Office also operates the Law Library. The office accounts for monies and disburses the local share directly to the locality. Local revenue collected in FY 05 for Grantor/Grantee taxes on the recordation of deeds alone was over \$15 million. The Clerk's Office collects fines and fees for other County departments that do not appear in the office's actual revenue. The departments benefiting from these collections are the Office of the Sheriff and the Commonwealth's Attorney.

BUDGET OVERVIEW

FY 07 Issues, Challenges & Trends:

- The Clerk of the Circuit Court will encounter many challenges in FY 07 as population growth continues to create increasing demands for services and stress on existing facilities. The number of felony criminal cases, misdemeanor criminal appeal cases and civil cases will increase as population growth continues.
- The increasing volume of deed recordings due to continued residential growth and home refinancing along with the increased value of real estate in Loudoun County will result in more revenue collected by the Clerk of Circuit Court.

FY 07 Major Goals:

- Study the feasibility of scanning older court files and storing these files offsite.
- Initiate a new cooperative criminal evidence review program with the Chief Judge, Commonwealth Attorney and the Sheriff to identify certain criminal evidence that may be transferred to the Office of the Sheriff for retention or destruction.
- Implement a new program in accounting operations to improve the frequency of payment of court ordered restitution to victims of crime.
- Integrate an online forms program through the website to allow citizens to prepare certain court documents prior to appearing in person at the courthouse.

FY 06 Major Achievements:

- Implemented a new pilot Circuit Court Case Management System (CCMS) in cooperation with the State Supreme Court to improve data accuracy and access.
- Implemented an aggressive new records purge system to destroy older case files per Virginia Code and Court order to maximize valuable file storage space.
- Implemented a pilot project to scan court order books on to computer disk for permanent retention for improved efficiency.
- Implemented a new fines and costs review system to improve the overview and collection of court ordered fines and costs.
- Implemented a new automated juror questionnaire processing system that allows citizens who receive a juror questionnaire to electronically respond to the questionnaire, resulting in more efficient processing by staff and a reduction of staff time required to process juror information.
- Implemented an improved probate website to provide more information on the probate of wills and estates and provide questions and answers to prepare citizens prior to appearing at the courthouse.
- Installed new security surveillance system to improve the security of valuable historical records.
- Developed plan and created displays and educational material to commemorate the county's 250th anniversary.

Clerk of Circuit Court

Department Financial Summary

Departmental Financial Summary	FY 03 Actual	FY 04 Actual	FY 05 Actual	FY 06 Adopted	FY 07 Adopted
Expenditures:					
Personnel	\$1,923,513	\$2,072,605	\$2,229,381	\$2,477,000	\$2,776,000
Operations & Maintenance	291,965	253,153	229,840	231,000	231,000
Capital Outlay	1,149,625	35,978	79,817	31,000	31,000
Total Expenditures:	\$3,365,103	\$2,361,736	\$2,539,038	\$2,739,000	\$3,038,000
Departmental Revenue:					
Local Fees, Charges, Etc.	\$10,039,446	\$11,506,402	\$19,088,731	\$13,289,000	\$21,788,000
Commonwealth	2,815,836	3,722,950	4,805,329	3,621,000	5,856,000
Total Revenues:	\$12,855,282	\$15,229,352	\$23,894,060	\$16,910,000	\$27,644,000
Local Tax Funding:	(\$9,490,179)	(\$12,867,616)	(\$21,355,022)	(\$14,171,000)	(\$24,606,000)
FTE Summary:	37.00	37.00	38.00	40.00	41.00

FY 07 Board Action: The FY 07 Adopted Fiscal Plan for the Clerk of the Circuit Court includes enhancements totaling 1.00 FTE and \$63,000 in additional local tax funding for an assistant bookkeeper. Revenue increases incorporate the department's estimates for increased Recordation tax, State Aid and Fee revenue. The FY 07 budget also includes funding for implementation of compensation increases and increased benefits costs effective September 2006.

Budget History:

FY 03: The Board approved 1.00 FTE for a probate clerk to provide services for visiting judges using the fourth circuit court courtroom.

FY 04 Mid-Year: The Board added 1.00 FTE for an archival records manager.

FY 06: The Board added 2.00 FTE for two deputy clerks.

Clerk of Circuit Court

Planned Accomplishments/Objectives for FY 07

Goal: Annually issue Concealed Weapon Permits within 45 days per the Code of Virginia.

Objective: Process and issue 100% of concealed weapon permit applications within 45 days.

<i>Performance Measures</i>	Actual FY 04	Actual FY 05	Est. FY 06	Proj. FY 07
Number of concealed weapons permits	563	554	625	640
Permits issued within guidelines	100%	100%	100%	100%

Goal: Ensure that a sufficient pool of jurors is provided for criminal and civil jury trials as required by the Code of Virginia.

Objective: Issue requisite number of jury summons to provide adequate numbers of jurors.

<i>Performance Measures</i>	Actual FY 04	Actual FY 05	Est. FY 06	Proj. FY 07
Number of jury summons issued	15,500	17,200	19,000	20,350
Successful jury pools provided to complete jury trials	100%	100%	100%	100%

Goal: Annually probate all wills and estates as required by the Code of Virginia.

Objective: Enhance website and public information kiosk to improve the efficiency of the probate division.

<i>Performance Measures</i>	Actual FY 04	Actual FY 05	Est. FY 06	Proj. FY 07
Number of wills probated and probate appointments	950	1,599	750	825
Wills probated within the guidelines of the Code of Virginia	100%	100%	100%	100%

Goal: Annually process all criminal fund court payments within 30 days as required by the Virginia Supreme Court.

Objective: Process and deliver 100% of applicable criminal fund payments to the Virginia Supreme Court.

<i>Performance Measures</i>	Actual FY 04	Actual FY 05	Est. FY 06	Proj. FY 07
Number of criminal fund court payments processed	734	761	775	788
Court payments processed within 30 days	100%	100%	100%	100%

Clerk of Circuit Court

Planned Accomplishments/Objectives for FY 07 - Continued

Goal: Provide public access to all deed recordings within 30 days per code of Virginia.

Objective: Process and scan all recording into land records system within 30 days.

<i>Performance Measures</i>	Actual FY 04	Actual FY 05	Est.. FY 06	Proj. FY 07
Number of digitally scanned legal records	1,014,721	1,084,547	1,261,235	1,324,297
Records available within 30 days	100%	100%	100%	100%

Goal: Index all court cases filed into case management system to provide public access and facilitate the judicial review of court cases as required by the Code of Virginia.

Objective: Index all court cases and update the case management system.

<i>Performance Measures</i>	Actual FY 04	Actual FY 05	Est.. FY 06	Proj. FY 07
Number of court cases filed*	6,245	5,546	7,037	7,283
Court cases entered into system within required standards	100%	100%	100%	100%

* Court cases include law, chancery, criminal, juvenile appeals and adoptions.

Standards are prescribed by the format of the Case Management System which is maintained by the Supreme Court of Virginia. The Clerk of the Circuit Court must provide court files for public access to court files per Virginia Code Section 19.2-240, 16.1- 302, 16.1-269.1, 8.01-331,17.1-129.